

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-14, as amended, are pending herein. Claim 6 has been canceled and claim 14 has been added.

Corrected formal drawings have been provided as requested by the Examiner.

The claims have been amended to overcome the Examiner's objections thereto and to comply with the provisions of §112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-4, 6, and 10 were rejected under §102(e) as anticipated by the Tateishi et al patent publication No. 2001/0039128. Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under §103(a) as obvious over Tateishi in view of the Mitsugi et al U.S. patent No. 4,412,113, and claims 1-6 and 10 were rejected under §103(a) as obvious over the Frankeney et al U.S. patent No. 5,691,041 in view of Tateishi.

Tateishi discloses a sleeve 131 which houses a coil spring and an upper plunger 110 which is urged by the coil spring 130 outwardly to partially protrude from the sleeve 131. Tateishi does not describe the material of the sleeve nor does it disclose or suggest that the sleeve is electrically conductive. On this point, the Watanabe et al patent No. 6,464,511 appears to disclose a metal tube 38 which houses a movable plunger 37 and a coil spring 41 (col. 4, lines 34-36).

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 6 and to make clear that a retaining member is formed separately from a conductive member. In the contact unit of Tateishi et al, the function of a retaining member rests in the sleeve 131 which is conductive. Therefore, depending on the inclination of the upper plunger 110, a contact point between the upper plunger 110 and the sleeve 131 is switched to a position between a base portion 113 and an intermediate portion 112, and accordingly the connecting resistance via the contact unit would be unstable.

In the claimed invention, since the retaining member 26 and a conductive member 27 are separately formed, it is possible to make the electrical resistance of the retaining member large. As shown in Fig. 4, it is possible to make the contact points Q1, Q2 between a contact 24a and the conductive member 27 stable by selecting the material of the retaining member. The retaining member does not form a conductive path.

For all the foregoing reasons, there is no disclosure or teaching in Tateishi et al of all

elements of applicant's presently claimed invention, and Tateishi et al is therefore not a proper grounds for rejection of applicant's claims under §102. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under §102 is respectfully requested. Similarly, there is no disclosure of teaching in Tateishi et al, Mitsugi et al or Frankeney et al which discloses or teaches anything which would have suggested applicant's presently claimed invention to one of ordinary skill in the art. Further, there is no disclosure or teaching in Tateishi et al, Mitsugi et al or Frankeney et al which suggest the desirability of combining any portions thereof effectively to anticipate or suggest applicant's presently claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these grounds of rejection are respectfully requested.

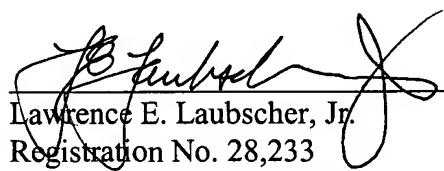
Claim 9 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter. New claim 14 has been added based on claim 9 and all intervening claims and thus is believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

Should the Examiner deem that further amendments to the claims would place them in even better condition for allowance, it is requested that she telephone Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

Allowance of claims 1-5 and 7-14 is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

July 2, 2004



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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence and documents identified as being enclosed herewith are being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Group Art Unit 2833, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on July 2, 2004.

Ann Simonini

